
Subject: SF-LOVERS Digest V6 #119
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Reply-To: SF-LOVERS at SRI-CSL
To: SF-LOVERS@SRI-CSL

SF-LOVERS Digest Thursday, 30 Dec 1982 Volume 6 : Issue 119

Today's Topics:

Misc - Harper's article
Books - book wanted, Asimov's FOUNDATION'S EDGE
Movies - Dune, SW/TESEB/ROTJ

Date: 29 December 1982 08:36 est
From: SSteinberg.SoftArts at MIT-MULTICS
Subject: Harper's article.

I have my own theories about who likes what KIND of SF flavored literature and why but I should point out that Harper's is into presenting this kind of article. A two part cover story titled "Panic Among the Philistines" points out the general bankruptcy and alienation of modern authors of MAINSTREAM fiction. A lot of John Updike fans were really upset but I couldn't help agreeing.

Another article expounded the view that environmentalists are all spoiled upper middle class brats who are trying to keep the working class in line by limiting the exploitation of natural resources. Since I fit right in this pocket I was rather offended.

This iconoclastic approach has been rather prominent ever since Harper's managed to squeak past its last cash crunch and apparently has kept the magazine solvent.

One approach might be to treat Harper's as a magazine of Speculative Fiction (or just plain speculation) in which authors try changing or extrapolating accepted wisdom. Modern literature is not particularly good, rather it is awful. The environmental movement is a neo-feudalistic force. If you toss in a grain of salt the slander is

often a lot easier to take.

sas

Date: 29 Dec 1982 11:43:06-EST
From: csin!cjh at CCA-UNIX
Subject: book wanted

I am wondering whether anyone else has heard of a book I read 20 years ago. I recall the title being MR. MURGATROYD, the title character being a gnomish type who blows out of a London fog to lead an American boy (whose father is attached to the embassy) on an assortment of adventures relating to both traditional fantasies and English mythology (one of the reappearing characters is a variant of the Green Man).

Does anyone else remember this? Has anyone seen a copy for sale anywhere??

Date: 18 Dec 82 18:23:05-PST (Sat)
From: harpo!floyd!cmcl2!philabs!sdcsvax!sdchema!donn at Ucb-C70
Subject: Speculation about FOUNDATION sequels (possible spoiler)

*** WARNING *** This discussion is not intended to be deep enough to merit a full SPOILER WARNING but if you are easily annoyed by spoilage you should skip over this...

Isaac Asimov didn't exactly tie up all the loose ends in FOUNDATION'S EDGE; in fact he left the way wide open for yet another FOUNDATION book. One of the interesting things about FOUNDATION'S EDGE is the way in which earlier Asimov books are tied into the story-line. Three things in particular are recalled but not developed in detail, suggesting possible deeper treatments in future works:

- o The Robots
- o The Earthmen
- o The Eternals

I assume that everyone is familiar with at least some of the classic robot stories: I, ROBOT; THE REST OF THE ROBOTS; THE CAVES OF STEEL; THE NAKED SUN. I understand from Asimov's remarks in IASFM that he is working on a new robot novel; perhaps this will fill in some of the necessary connections with the "Galactic Empire" universe of FOUNDATION. THE BOOK OF FLIGHT (mentioned obliquely in EDGE as a source of legends about Earth) apparently describes a resolution of

the problem which is presented in THE CAVES OF STEEL and THE NAKED SUN: the men of Earth overcome their agoraphobia but not their fear of robots, and they start a new wave of settlement ('the Flight') which bypasses the robot worlds and leads to the development of the Empire. Of course we do meet a robot in EDGE, but it raises as many questions as it resolves...

The Eternals and the Earthmen are less well known than the Robots. Earthmen in Galactic Empire times are the subject of Asimov's very first novel, PEBBLE IN THE SKY. I went back and re-read this book recently to see how it might reflect on plot developments in FOUNDATION V. A number of important things from PEBBLE are mentioned in EDGE:

There really is a planet called Earth in the Sirius Sector and it really is considered to be the original home of humanity. It was radioactive, either to begin with or eventually, and this grew worse till the planet died. There was indeed a mind-enhancing invention that came to nothing. All this is considered history on the home planet of my ancestors. [p. 204, EDGE]

PEBBLE takes place in the Year of the Galactic Era 827, back at the beginning of the Empire's long history. Earth is a backwater planet whose only distinction is that its surface is radioactive. The archaeologist Bel Arvardan suspects that Earth is the original planet of the human race and pays a visit to the planet to test his theory. Unfortunately for him, Earth is a rebellious place which is held in check only by an Imperial garrison, and the semi-secret Society of Ancients is continually plotting vengeance on the oppressing Galactics. Arvardan stumbles into an ugly scheme by the Ancients to wipe out all other life in the Galaxy (I guess the Galaxy just isn't Krikkit) and spends the book being alternately arrogant and humbled. But that's not all--

Joseph Schwartz is a retired Chicago tailor who goes for a walk on a pleasant morning in June of 1949 and never comes home. As a result of a mysterious laboratory accident at the Institute for Nuclear Research across town, he is thrown thousands of years into the future. The farmer who eventually takes him in is annoyed by Schwartz's inability to speak the language and is afraid to be caught out by the ever-vigilant Society of Ancients for hoarding an elderly father-in-law (everyone is supposed to submit to euthanasia at the age of 60), so Schwartz is disposed of by being forced to act as a guinea pig for a new mind-enhancing device, the Synapsifier. Schwartz develops mental abilities equivalent to those of Stor Gendibal in EDGE and his intelligence triples. The Ancients find out about Schwartz and attempt to eliminate him, believing him to be an agent of the

Empire...

PEBBLE isn't bad for a first novel. But Asimov never explains what happens to Schwartz after the events in the book, nor what becomes of the Synapsifier. In EDGE we never learn the reason why all references to Earth have been deleted from the Imperial library on Trantor: you don't suppose that the Synapsifier and perhaps even Joe Schwartz are still around somewhere after thousands of years? Golan Trevize is planning on visiting Earth, however... maybe we will find out in FOUNDATION V.

The Eternals are described in THE END OF ETERNITY. A rather different account is made of them in EDGE than what I remember of the original book, though. Unfortunately my copy of ETERNITY was the victim of a garage sale while I was an undergraduate so I can't make a direct comparison; is anyone on the net willing to review this one?

There's all kinds of useful fuel for speculation about FOUNDATION V... Does anyone remember whether THE STARS LIKE DUST or THE CURRENTS OF SPACE have any interesting material?

Donn Seeley UCSD Chemistry Dept. RRCF ucbox!sdcsvox!sdchema!donn
(619) 452-4017 sdamos!donn@nprdc

Date: 22 Dec 82 8:36:38-PST (Wed)
From: decvox!microsof!fluke!vax1.witters at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: News about the Dune Movie

Yeah, I've been reading about the Dune movie for about three years in the newspaper. Frankly, I'm beginning to doubt if it will ever be made. The last thing I read said it was being made by the same guy who made the recent Flash Gordon movie and King Kong (Dino DeLaurentus (sp?)). Supposedly, filming has already begun in Tunisia. The movie rights to the book have passed through three or four people. Considering the quality of the movies Dino has made before, I don't think Dune will be anything to look forward to.

I don't give a damn if you sign your name or
not.

John Witters

Date: 21 Dec 82 7:50:12-PST (Tue)
From: harpo!ihnp4!ixn5c!inuxc!burton at Ucb-C70
Subject: News about the Dune Movie

Last night on 'Entertainment Tonight', they announced that the lead singer for the Police, Sting, will be in the upcoming movie Dune. I don't remember if they said anything about the lead role, but what amazed me most is the word 'upcoming'; has anyone out there heard anything else about this movie? Whose making it? When will it be scheduled for release? Any other rumors?

Doug Burton
Bell Labs, Indy
inuxc!burton

Date: 21 Dec 82 20:49:51-PST (Tue)
From: harpo!eagle!mhuxt!mhuxa!mhuxh!mhuxm!pyuxjj!rlr at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: News about the Dune Movie

Earlier this year, I saw an article purporting that the award- winning (?) David Lynch, of "The Elephant Man" and (more ... uh, importantly) "Eraserhead" fame, would be directing the "Dune" movie. Please note that his previous works are totally black & white, with that deep dark industrial quality. I cannot confirm if he is still involved with the film, or indeed if he ever was.

Date: 13 Dec 82 10:37:43-PST (Mon)
From: teklabs!tektronix!rich at Ucb-C70
Subject: Light Sabers

What's with all this "where does he get his LS" stuff? Surely, in a society that can produce blasters and Death Stars, making a simple light saber can be no trick. Granted, they "are rare." Big deal. Swords are not all that common in a society that uses M16s in battle, so why are we debating that Darth can't have a LS if Luke has his father's?

Note the color of the light, also. OB1's and Luke's have this really "pure" blue-white color, while DV's is a very evil dirty red. Does this imply that the light saber is a mirror of the soul, or simply that DV's was made at a different time or place than the others?

Rich Amber

Date: 20 Dec 82 14:24:01-PST (Mon)
From: decvax!utzoo!laura at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: SW-IV & -V

I went and saw SW4 and SW5 again too. LUCAS is UNFAIR to WOOKIEES and WOMEN!! There are no female fighter-pilots, or Jedi, or officers of the Empire or even (as far as we know) storm troopers. The rebels had one female communications officer in TESB, though. In the triumphant procession at the end of SW Chewie, Han, and Luke march up in front of the rebel assembly ... but only Han and Luke receive medals. Drat! Is it against the Chewie's religion to wear anything besides that silver ammo-belt? (which may not even be an ammo belt?). Oh I forgot -- you get one shot of what is probably shoes on Chewie in TESB.

I have finally discovered why I *much prefer* SW to TESB (contrary to popular opinion). In SW the characters are often impetuous and conceited, but in TESB, even with time to think they act *STUPIDLY*.

Consider. Luke is in a cave with an abomknable snowman, miles and miles away from the base, and night is falling. What would you do? Start *walking* home? or kill the snow beast (or drive him away) with your light saber, and stay sheltered in the warm cave until morning? I know what *I* would do....

Han has survived a night outdoors on Hoth-moon. Now he wants to go out and check on the robot-droid-probe. Does he take a spacecraft which have now been fixed to work under cold conditions? As far as we know, he and Chewie walk -- though they may have taken Tauntauns. Why? Couldnt Chewie fit into a spacefighter? Are robot-droid-probes sensitive to electronic equipment?

Doesnt Darth Vader know that you never put all your prisoners together so they can comfort each other, regain morale, and plan how to escape? He knew about solitary confinement in SW -- why has he forgotten in TESB?

Questions: Luke draws his saber first every time he faces Vader, incl- uding in the cave. Anybody know whether Vader or OB1 draws first in their great battle? I forgot to look. How does R2D2 go down stairs? Why does Luke throw the food stick which he wont let Yoda eat into the swamp? What does the princess do her hair with after days of torture while in Solitary confinement?

Laura Creighton
decvax!utzoo!laura

Date: 18 Dec 82 17:43:56-PST (Sat)
From: hplabs!hao!seismo!rocheste!lee at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: Luke"s mechanical hand

I hereby predict that Luke's mechanical hand will kill Vader
when Luke is frozen into in action by lines "I am your father"
or some other distraction. (shades of Amber)

Date: 19 Dec 82 16:16:30-PST (Sun)
From: harpo!ihnp4!larry at Ucb-C70
Subject: Luke Strikes First?

In an earlier article, somebody thought that in both "major"
battles between Luke and Darth, that Luke started the attack. This is
wrong. In the cave, Luke ignites his lightsaber first, but only holds
in in front of him -Darth makes the first lunge. HOWEVER in the
carbon freezing chamber, Luke definitely does make the first move.
The "restarts" of this fight have: Darth with light saber drawn, but
instead "throws" things at Luke; and Darth almost surprising Luke with
the 1st blow.

Some "other" thoughts: The Star Wars flicks are fantasy and
basically follow a generic good-guys vs. pirates "swashbuckler". The
movies are (for the most part) aimed at the "young" (pre-teen to early
teen) audience. Based on this, OB-1 can NOT have lied and Darth MUST
have lied -- Darth is NOT Luke's dad. (I'll bend somewhat that Darth
maybe a clone, but I doubt it) Also based on these ideas, I doubt that
Leia will have ANYBODIES baby (to be the "other").

With the whole Star Wars being a trilogy of triologies, what
are the 1st and 3rd tri's about?? Well, I recall an interview with
Lucas somewhat after SW4-ANH is a big hit. In it he spoke of the next
flick (SW5-TESB), but more important, he mentions that the original
idea for episode 4 was supposed to play of the 'droids more! It
wasn't until the "studio empire" told him that he had to punch up the
human parts (or no flick) that Luke (and the others) became major
characters. Now since Lucas can call all the shots, I'll bet that the
overall 9 movies are about Artoo and Seepio. (clever the way Lucas
pick their model-numbers so that they "sound" like names! --[[OB-1??
]])

One more thought on "the other" -- who or whatever it may be
-- it doesn't HAVE to be Jedi. Remember, Yoda tells Luke that the

future is "difficult to tell... clouded by emotions". I suspect that there really won't be any new characters (not major ones at least), but that the "other" hope will be Leia's love for Luke. Luke is obviously taken in by her from the first time Artoo projects her image. Poor confused Leia in episode's 4 & 5 has been balancing between Luke and Han. In RotJ, I think she'll really pick one --Luke. Han will really turn out to be "Mr SOLO" --and not want to settle down. (that or else some other beauty will turn his head)

????

Larry Marek
...ihuxf!larry

Date: 20 Dec 82 9:55:37-PST (Mon)
From: decvax!lutzoo!utcsrgv!perelgut at Ucb-C70
Subject: SW-IV & -V

Well, you people convinced me to go back and see episodes IV and V again. Some interesting things have been missed or mis-stated.

- 1) Darth Vader kills lots of people. He starts by picking up the commander of Leia's ship (the opening scenes) by the neck and shaking him until he is dead. Not particularly nice. He also kills lots of people by using the Force to strangle them.
- 2) OB-1 is definately called OB-1. It seems that the future has slurred the 1 to sound more like Wan, but the more cultured types (such as old Ben himself) speak clearly enough.
- 3) Nobody mentionned that Luke's uncle's name was Owen (O-1). Ben also says this fairly clearly at least twice.
- 4) When Ben says Vader murdered Luke's father, I got the feeling he was speaking in a metaphysical sense. Vader (the dark side) won out over Skywalker (the better side). Thus Vader "murdered" Luke's father.
- 5) There is some resemblance between the emperor and Ben but the credits list them as different actors.

6) Leia is a little slut who obviously wants Luke, Han, and Chewie.

7) Luke's light saber is very likely gone, although he could have used the Force to call it back to him.

Here is some wild speculation. I am not at all convinced that Luke will be an all around good-guy for the next movie. Although it goes against shlock American film-making practices, Luke could very well become a baddie. I wouldn't be surprised to see Vader/Skywalker and Luke take on the Emperor and then take over the Galaxy. Perhaps Vader might even die in the encounter. But the "other" will win out in the end.

One more thought before I go. Did anyone else notice that none of the good guys ever got hit by the laser blasts. At least not seriously. However, R2D2 stood in the line of fire more often without suffering any real damages. It (he?) only got caught a couple of time and usually it was "fortuitous happenstance" since it advanced R2D2 toward his current goals. R2D2 also circumvented every security system set up and talked freely with all other computers. If all R2 units had that capability the Galaxy would be controlled by 'droids, or unscrupulous 'droid owners.

--- Stephen Perelgut ---

Date: 21 Dec 82 8:03:58-PST (Tue)
From: harpo!ihnp4!larry at Ucb-C70
Subject: Darth vs OB-1

I watch episode 4 last nite. Some interesting points from the Darth vs OB-1 light saber battle. First OB-1 seems to almost "stumble" upon Darth. Darth is standing there blocking the way with his light saber ignited, OB-1 turns his on (in one of the best effects parts of the movie) --then OB-1 makes the first lunge!! As the fight goes on, it becomes obvious that OB-1 is maneuvering the fight to distract the other guards so the Luke, Liea, & Han can escape. OB-1's final words still haunt me tho-- "You can't win Darth. Even if you strike me down, I'll become more powerful than you can ever imagine" So far, all the transcended OB-1 has done is whisper into Luke's ear. Doesn't sound very powerful to me. I suspect OB-1 to have a bigger roll in RotJ.

Larry Marek

Date: 19 Dec 82 17:02:20-PST (Sun)

From: harpo!floyd!cmcl2!philabs!sdcsvox!sdchema!pha at Ucb-C70
Subject: Lukes hand

I checked up on the book of TESB, and discovered that no one could have recovered Luke's hand; it was a gas planet!

Date: 18 Dec 82 18:29:13-PST (Sat)
From: harpo!npoiv!alice!sjb at Ucb-C70
Subject: Light Sabers

I think the fact that Darth's saber is red and Luke's and Ben's are blue/white is a VERY strong hint that the sabers ARE powered by the force. Hell, just because there's an on button doesn't mean it's not powered by the force. After all, if it was powered by the force and there were no button, it would be on ALL THE TIME! Now, I don't know about you, but I sure don't want that thing on and bouncing up and down while I running (or even walking)! Nice way to amputate your own leg. What does this all mean? If the light saber is powered by the force, then Han sure has the force with him, leading to Han as the other.

Date: 20 Dec 82 13:46:50-PST (Mon)
From: harpo!ihnp4!ihuxr!lew at Ucb-C70
Subject: Dark Father

When my four year old son had just seen "The Empire Strikes Back" (his first movie,) I asked him what he liked best in it. He pulled his pacifier out of his mouth and intoned "Daarrrrth Vaaaaderrrr". For my part, I thought Vader's revelation to Luke provided the only genuine drama in either movie. I can only hope that Lucas doesn't fumble this opportunity away with some facile contrivance.

Date: 29 Dec 1982 12:45:50-EST
From: David.Smith at CMU-CS-IUS at CMU-CS-A
Subject: Star wars minutiae & coming episodes

This stuff about stormtroopers' armor and lightsabers makes me think you all take SW too seriously. When I first saw SW4, I thought it was a lot of fun, but a poor movie full of stock lines and settings. (And I am not a frequent movie-goer.) On later reflection, however, I figured that Lucas was intentionally parodying westerns &c. Consider how C3PO and R2D2 shuffled and rolled (respectively) slowly across the corridor to get to the life pods, while storm troopers filled the air

with blaster bullets. Intentionally implausible. Then there are spaceships maneuvering in space like airplanes, and on and on. If the armor seems ineffective, it is because they are the bad guys.

The speculations on the other trilogies prompted me to get out my copy of Time magazine for May 19, 1980 -- the one with Darth Vader on the cover. From a box:

... The remaining movies, fore and aft, have not yet been laid out in detail, but Lucas has the framework, a kind of history of what happened in that galaxy long ago and far away. A preview:

For years the universe was governed by a republic, which was regulated by the order of Jedi Knights... But eventually the citizens of the republic "didn't care enough to elect competent officials," says Lucas the historian, and so their government collapsed. A sorcerer, a bad counterpart of Yoda, blocked all opposition and declared himself emperor...

The emperor subverts Darth Vader to his side, and together he and Vader betray the other Knights, nearly all of whom are killed in their trap. Ben Kenobi escapes, and after a fierce struggle he does such injury to Vader that forever after Vader must wear a mask and that noisy life-support system. The fall of the republic and the rise of the empire will form the first of Lucas' three trilogies.

The second trilogy ... centers on Luke Skywalker, who will be seen as a child in Episode 3. The "Empire" continues the Skywalker story, and ... [RotJ] will end it, with either Luke or Darth Vader walking away from their final bout. The last three episodes involve the rebuilding of the republic.

Only two of the main characters will appear in all nine films,
and
they are the robots, Artoo Detoo and Threepio. Says Lucas:
"In
effect, the story will be told through their eyes."

Date: Wednesday, 29 December 1982 19:51-EST
From: Vince Fuller
Subject: detection of good and evil in the Force

Date: 20 Dec 82 14:08:15 EST (Mon)
From: Rene Steiner
To: SF-LOVERS at MIT-MC
Re: detection of good and evil in the Force

Ah, but Good CAN be detected - Darth Vader detected Obi-wan on the
Death Star ("I feel a presence in the force, someone I have not
detected since...." not an exact quote, but you get the idea.)

I disagree. What he said was "I feel a tremor in the Force, something
I have not felt since...". He felt the magnitude and character of
Obi-wan's mastery of the force, not its "goodness" or "evilness" (also
when trying to shoot down Luke: "the Force is strong in this one"). It
would seem that powerful users of the Force radiate an aura which
acts sort of as a "signature" for them.

--vaf

Date: 15 Dec 82 18:32:41-PST (Wed)
From: decvax!ut zoo!watmath!bstempleton at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: Food for thought.....TESB, the "other, etc.

I think the force is with Han Solo, too - although he's not the other.

I should point out however that Han did NOT hit Darth Vader in the
death star battle. He hit Vader's wingman, and that ship went out of
control and crashed into Vader's ship.

Date: 17 Dec 82 12:15:01-PST (Fri)
From: decvax!yale-com!brunix!jah at Ucb-C70
Subject: Re: re: light saber

The light saber may well be the only weapon that can stop a well trained jedi. Remember what happened when Darth was shot at close range from a blaster? (make that "with a blaster") He simply catches the "bullets."

Date: 22 Dec 82 14:12:50-PST (Wed)
From: harpo!ihnp4!ihldt!tmh at Ucb-C70
Subject: re: Darth Vader in the cave

Saw TESB last night and watched the cave scene with some particular interest. Could it be that the face inside the Vader helmet is Vader's original face? (This would provide fuel to the clone theory.)

Tom Harris

Date: 28 Dec 1982 1623-PST
From: Dolata at SUMEX-AIM
Subject: The FORCE, or bad editing?

I recently saw SW-ANH (IV) in a situation where we could examine the film closely. In the fight between Darth Vader and Obiwan, Obiwan's brown cloak starts to collapse 2 frames (at least) before Darth's light sabre hits it!!!! So, did Darth kill Obiwan, or was he gone already? Or am I picking nits with the editor?

Date: 16 Dec 82 15:26:20-PST (Thu)
From: decvax!cwruecmp!ccc at Ucb-C70
Subject: Star Wars, Empire, RotJ, etc. :-)

>From: Clayton M. Elwell [...!decvax!cwruecmp!ccc]

"Previews, Plotlines, Spoilers, Inside Knowledge... A true Jedi craves not these things..."

Date: 14 Dec 82 16:54:19-PST (Tue)
From: harpo!npoiv!hou5f!hou5d!hou5a!hou5e!jjm at Ucb-C70
Subject: The Emperor in The Empire Strikes Back

The Emperor in TESB was played by an English actor named Clive Reville (sp?).

I have seen him in other movies, so this is not a fake name.

Despite a previous news item, Alec Guinness is not dead. (Anyone who saw the recent TV movie "Smiley's People" knows that.)

Jim McParland
BTL - Holmdel
hou5e!jjm

Date: 17 Dec 82 11:43:12-PST (Fri)
From: menlo70!sytek!zehntel!tektronix!rich at Ucb-C70
Subject: DV not OTHER

Hmmm. If we assume OB1 to be a "good guy" and "DV" to be a "bad guy" and knowing that there is "some good" even in bad guys, wouldn't OB1 have been able to detect it? And so far, with the exception of Yoda, OB1 is (was) the ranking Jedi (master of the force). If there was good there, OB1 would not have attempted to kill DV. I suggest we look elsewhere. Or better yet, wait for the real answer in May.

R.Amber

Date: 20 Dec 82 10:35:28-PST (Mon)
From:
Subject: RotJ: Yet Another Speculation

Several months ago, on the PBS series "Nova", there was a program on the uses of computers in the arts (mostly neat video stuff). One of the segments was about work that was being done at LucasFilms. If recollection serves, they had some nifty technique whereby the sound of a musical instrument (a flute) was modulated into speaking patterns by a human voice. A rather haunting demonstration film was included.

Now, why would LucasFilms be working on something like this?

Most Star Wars maniacs know that the Star Wars saga is purportedly derived from "The Journal of the Whills". It is quite possible that the flute-voice was created for the Whills, who would be seen or heard for the first time in Revenge of the Jedi.

Remember, you heard it here first. Unless it's wrong.

Mike

End of SF-LOVERS Digest

